

643
175

most presumptuous hazard an opinion as to the propriety of his commands or actions; but fear alone produces this instantaneous compliance with his will, however capricious; and obedience is maintained by an exemplary severity that, however it may command submission, cannot create affection.

643
643
175

"The rigorous exercise of such unbounded power will of course be tempered by customs and usages, which having the force of law and sanctity of religion, must challenge some respect, but the real situation of the people is complete slavery; under so arbitrary a sway safety of person and permanency of property must depend on the precarious will of the ruler; political freedom forms no part of the elements of an Asiatic system of government, nor perhaps is it desirable it should; but the inhabitants of this little state are interdicted from almost any share of that practical liberty which their neighbours enjoy."

Col. Fraser, in his despatches to the Supreme Government dated 7th April 1834 states: "The whole and entire power of the country and almost the very faculty of thinking, seem to be concentrated in the Rájah himself, and we shall continue to know little or nothing of the disposition and wishes of the people of Coorg until the utter and permanent abolition of the power of the Rájah shall emancipate them from their present slavish fear."

Again under date 12th April 1834: "Their minds are so abject and enslaved, that they (the Coorgs) dare not speak against their late Rájah or they have not a motive for doing so."

Again in a letter dated 14th July 1834: "If we could succeed in dispelling the moral gloom, that has weighed upon the spirits and faculties of the people, as a consequence of the wretched system of government under which they were placed, an effect that, I am happy to say, is becoming daily more perceptible, I think the small district of Coorg will be

— 235 —

found in its ameliorated condition a year or two hence, to possess many advantages denied to other parts of India."

642
643
175

000

4. HISTORY OF THE COORG RĀJAHS
AS DELINEATED IN THE RĀJENDRANĀME AND FROM
OTHER DOCUMENTARY SOURCES.

From 1633 to 1807.

PREFATORY REMARKS.

175*

The Rājendranāme (account of Rājendra, the king of heroes) is the work of Dodda-Virājendra Vodeya, the hero of Coorg History and the beau ideal of the Coorgs of a warrior king, and comprises, from 1633 to 1807, a period of 175 years 2 months and 7 days.

A manuscript copy of the Canarese original was found in the Archives at Mercara in 1834, and, with the original English translation obtained from the records of the Chief Commissioner's Office at Bangalore, was edited by Dr. Moegling

[217]

and printed for the Madras Government in the Mangalore Mission Press in 1857. The subjoined seal of the Coorg Rājahs ornaments the front page. The names of the Rājah and of his ancestors as well as those of English Governor Generals, Governors and other high functionaries are written with red ink throughout the book. The chronicle is very well written. It gives the history of Coorg, especially the account of the Rājah's exploits and of his intercourse with the officers of the East India Company in simple language. Not one foolish story, not one improper expression, disfigures this Canarese



30*